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# REAGAN SETTING UP 6 CABINET COUNCILS TO SHAPE POLICIES

## EACH UNIT TO HAVE SPECIALTY

All Secretaries Would Take Part in Planning, Rather Than Only an Inner Circle of Top Aides

By HEDRICK SMITH

Special to The New York Times

**WASHINGTON,** Feb. 14 — President Reagan plans to set up a network of six Cabinet councils to serve as the formal bodies for debating and shaping the major policies of his Administration, his counselor, Edwin Meese 3d, said today.

The plan, which is expected to be formalized by a policy memorandum in a few days, would give Mr. Reagan the most structured system of Cabinet organization in the modern Presidency, although some concepts have been borrowed from earlier Administrations.

Mr. Reagan initially considered setting up a Cabinet executive committee, an inner circle of his Cabinet, as he had done as Governor of California.

### Cabinet Praised for Teamwork

But Mr. Meese said in an interview that Mr. Reagan was so pleased with the candor and teamwork of the full Cabinet that he decided to embody his concept of Cabinet government in a system of councils, organized by general areas of concern.

"The Cabinet meetings have not turned into a rambling, multifaceted debating society with voluminous talk," said Mr. Meese. "The Cabinet as a whole has worked so well together that it has not been necessary to scale it down to an executive committee."

Mr. Meese said that in addition to the National Security Council, which is established by law, Mr. Reagan intends to have Cabinet councils on economic affairs, on natural resources and environment, on human resources, on commerce and trade, and on food and agriculture.

### Would Formulate Policy Options

The Reagan plan would put the six Cabinet councils under the respective leadership of the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Interior, Health and Human Services, Commerce and Agriculture to develop policy options for the President. Then he and Vice President Bush would meet with them for the main policy discussions and decisions.

This setup would carry the concept of Cabinet-level committees further than did any previous Administration. In addition to the National Security Council, President Nixon had a Domestic Council and President Ford had an Economic Policy Board.

Because of his experience in California, Mr. Reagan had for some time toyed with the idea of setting up an inner Cabinet, feeling that a small, trusted group would give him more outspoken and uninhibited advice. Mr. Meese said that the President still reserved the option of setting up an overall Cabinet planning group at a later time, but after meeting with the full Cabinet eight times he wanted to try the Cabinet council system.

Mr. Meese, who played a central role in organizing the Cabinet network and also managed Mr. Reagan's cabinet affairs when he was Governor of California, said the new Cabinet structure was in keeping with President Reagan's repeated pledges in the campaign to have his Cabinet rather than the White House staff take the lead in helping him formulate policy. It was also intended to reduce the feuding over policy, jurisdiction and responsibilities between the White House and Cabinet departments in previous administrations.

At one point in the transition to office, Mr. Reagan and his aides considered having Cabinet secretaries take offices in the Executive Office Building next to the White House so that they would be politically and psychologically closer to the President than to their own departments. Mr. Meese said that while this idea had been abandoned, the Administration was now thinking of having offices near the White House for principal aides of the Cabinet officers.

Mr. Meese said that in an effort to insure efficient management of the Cabinet and prompt followup action on Presiden-

tial decisions, the network of councils would be monitored by computerized followup memorandums and deadlines for Cabinet action, which would be supervised by Craig Fuller, the Cabinet Secretary.

The White House Office of Development, headed by Martin Anderson, and the National Security Council staff, headed by Richard V. Allen, would provide staff support for the Cabinet councils.

The Reagan plan, Mr. Meese said, is to have the full Cabinet meet three or four times a month for a review of Presidential decisions and matters that "cut across the board." However, he said that the bulk of Mr. Reagan's policy discussions would take place at meetings with his Cabinet councils. Vice President Bush, Mr. Meese and James A. Baker 3d, the White House chief of staff, will be members of all the councils.

Otherwise the structure of the Cabinet councils is to be this:

National Security Council: Secretaries of State and Defense, Director of Central Intelligence, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, on occasion, the Attorney General, Treasury Secretary and director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Council on Economic Affairs: Secretaries of Treasury, Commerce and State, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers and the director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Council on Commerce and Trade: Secretaries of Commerce, Treasury, State, Agriculture and Transportation, and the President's special trade representative.

Council on Natural Resources and Environment: Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture, Transportation, Energy, and Housing and Urban Development.

Council on Human Resources: Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Labor, Agriculture, Education, Housing and Urban Development, and the Attorney General.

Council on Food and Agriculture: Secretaries of Agriculture, Interior, Commerce and Transportation and the President's special trade representative.